

A Pageant

OF

The Life of Fanny Crosby

The Blind Gospel Song Writer

By Edith Kinney Doten

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By The Fanny J. Crosby Memorial
Room 714, 150 Fifth Ave., New York City

An appreciation by Prof. H. Augustine Smith of Boston University:

Mrs. Edith K. Doten, of Boston University, has written a most effective pageant featuring the life and character of Fanny Crosby. She has realized in this pageant a beautiful blend of the practical and the spiritual ideals in the life of Miss Crosby. Her appreciation of those fine qualities which enter into all art, music, and drama are shown on every page of her work. The theme is vivid and compelling, contrasting light and shade, fast and slow, loud and soft. There are fine touches and turns in her mechanics of production. The pageant moves to a climax, and very few pageants of this length do. I can heartily recommend this dramatic production to churches, church schools and clubs.

This pageant is designed to be produced in a church vestry or auditorium without scenery, and with only very few properties. A curtain is drawn by two pages in costume, after each episode, before the musical interlude. Immediately on the drawing of the curtain let each participant leave the platform carrying his own properties. The participants in the next episode should come on at once, bringing their own properties. Men should be delegated to move the heavy articles. At every rehearsal rehearse the scene-shifting.

The songs are found in Songs for Service and The Male Quartette.

A PAGEANT OF THE LIFE OF FANNY CROSBY The Blind Gospel Song Writer

— Prologue —

PROLOCUTOR We take you back tonight upon the stage
To show you pictures of a recent age
That you may entertained be and see
The Stewardship of Personality.
We come to act and play the part of one
Who had a handicapped existence, one
Who walked in light, yet walked the darkened way,
Yet happy singing us the songs of day.
She had no gold yet flung her treasure free
Which taken binds the heart of God and thee.
Persistence, concentration, hope and prayer
With unseen forces that the Lord will share
With those who do the superhuman task
You'll see portrayed. An offering then we'll ask
To carry out her unfulfilled hope
The Fanny Crosby Home for Aged Folk.

Episode I.

PERSONS

FANNY CROSBY, blind, to represent a 9-year old girl.
6 to 12 children, some boys, some girls, varying in age.

GRAMMA CROSBY.

THE TAILOR.

THE POSTMAN.

PROPERTIES

A large, old-fashioned chair for Grandma.

A wooden foot stool.

A table. Candlestick on table, if desired.

Episode I.

BLIND FANNY CROSBY—9 years old

Fanny's grandmother sits knitting.

Little girls and boys come trooping with little Fanny Crosby in the centre of the group.

This is the period of Andrew Jackson, 1829, Autumn.

*Children troop in carrying
books and slates and tin
dinner pails.*

A GIRL, excitedly, as children
rush in, with Fanny by the
hand:

O Grammy Crosby, Please may we take
Fanny to school with us again some day?

GRAMMY CROSBY, putting her
glasses on top of her head:
Fanny shakes her head and
pouts.

Why, yes, child.

GIRL:

Everybody at school loved Fanny and wants
her to come again.

FANNY: (*Removing hat*)
A BOY:

GRAMMY CROSBY:

A BOY:

GRAMMY CROSBY TO FANNY:

FANNY:

SEVERAL CHILDREN:

GRAMMY CROSBY:

FANNY *again spreads her
skirts, makes a curtsy and
recites:*

(*stamps her foot*)

*The children clap and put
their arms around her
caressingly.*

A GIRL, *adjusting her slate
with pendant sponge:*

GRAMMY C.:

GIRL *with slate:*

GRAMMY C.:

CHILDREN:

GRAMMY C.:

CHILDREN:

GRAMMY C.:

FANNY *sings alone:*

CHILDREN *sing chorus:*

*Written by Fanny Crosby in 1828.

†Crosby, "I Am Jesus' Little Friend." W. H. Doane, 1873, or tune
"Seymour."

FANNY:

CHORUS:

GRAMMY CROSBY, *reaching for
her reticule on the arm of
her rocking chair:*

*Giving each an 1829 large
copper cent.*

CHILDREN (*Bowing*)

BOY, *looking out of window:*

Runs out.

Children curtsy and exit.

FANNY *finds her copper
half-cent, feels her way to
her grandmother, throws
her arms around her.*

The teacher doesn't.

Were you worried, Mrs. Crosby, 'cause we
were so late home?

Well, it is getting dark. What kept you so
late?

We kept ourselves. After school teacher
talked with Fanny, and asked her if she
knew any pieces to speak.

And what did you answer, Fanny?

I said I have a piece I made up.

Say it again for us.

Say it, Fanny, dear.

*Oh what a happy soul am I!

Although I cannot see

I am resolved that in this world

Contented I will be,

How many blessings I enjoy

That other people don't!

To weep and sigh because I'm blind

I cannot and I won't.

And that wasn't all, Grammy Crosby, She
sang a piece and she herself made it up.

My! My! No wonder you were late from
school.

She sang, "I am Jesus' Little Friend."

You must all know that. Don't you all sing
that in Sabbath School?

Yes, Ma'm.

Well, let me hear you all sing it then.

O, Fanny sings it all. Please let her sing it.

Let Fanny sing the verses and all sing the
chorus. Now, Fanny—

†Very young and weak am I,

Yet he guides me with His eye

In a pleasant path he leads me

With a gentle hand he feeds me

Chides me when I'm doing wrong,

Listens to my happy song.

I am Jesus' little friend

On His mercy I depend.

He is with me all the day

With me in my busy play;

O'er my waking and my sleeping

Jesus still a watch is keeping

I can lay me down and rest

Sweetly pillowed on his breast.

I am Jesus' little friend

On His mercy I depend."

That is very nice, children. Remember the
words of that song as long as you live. And
here is something for each of you.

Oh, Thank you. Let me see yours. Yes, just
like mine—13 stars. One for each of us.
Thank you, Ma'm. Thank you Ma'm.

Oh, my sakes, it's getting dark. I'll be so
late home I'll have to learn a chapter in the
Bible by heart before bed time. Come an all
of you.

Enter a Tailor with a new suit over his arm.

TAILOR:

How pretty the children's voices sounded as I came along. I stopped and listened.

Fanny draws back.

GRAMMY C.:

TAILOR:

O, good evening, neighbor.

Good evening, I so enjoyed the music. I am hard put to make the hymn for divine worship next Sabbath.

FANNY:

Have you got to make it up yourself?

TAILOR:

Yes, we haven't any hymn books. The parson and the chorister each have one tune book.

FANNY:

Do you have to make up all the hymns?

TAILOR:

No, we take turns and it is my turn now, and of course I want to do as well as Deacon Brown did last Sabbath.

GRAMMY C.:

He is a holy man, Deacon Brown, and has the true spirit of worship.

TAILOR:

I like that hymn of his that goes—

"Kind father, condescend to bless

Thy sacred word to me

That, aided by thy heavenly grace

I may remember Thee.

"And when life's journey shall be o'er

Thy glory may we see;

Dear Saviour, I will ask no more

Than this, Remember me."

FANNY:

I can make up verses. See the copper Grammy gave me for reciting them and singing a hymn.

TAILOR: (*laughing a little*)

Well, perhaps you can help me finish my hymn, little lass.

FANNY:

If I was bigger, perhaps I.... When I get older perhaps.....

Throws arms around her grandmother excitedly

Oh, Grammy, do you suppose I could ever write hymns? How I'd like to.

GRAMMY C.:

There, there, child. I shouldn't be surprised. It would not be strange, little Fanny. But I must be going.

TAILOR:

FANNY:

Good night, I have to go to church with Gram'ma, or I'd come to hear your hymn next Sabbath.

GRAMMY C.:

Good night.

TAILOR:

Good night.

FANNY:

Good night.

FANNY sits on her grandmother's wooden footstool.

Grammy, just what is a hymn anyway?

GRAMMY C.:

A hymn. A hymn is a religious song of the heart addressed to God.

FANNY:

A prayer in verse?

GRAMMY C.:

Yes, a prayer to be set to music or sung to one of the old church tunes such as Old Hundred.

FANNY:

Then if I say my prayers in verses they would be hymns?

GRAMMY C.:

Just so.

FANNY:

I..... think..... I..... could.

GRAMMY C.:

Only they must be dignified enough for all the people to sing in church or use for family worship.

Fanny starts. FANNY:

I hear the postman's old horse.

GRAMMA C.:

You certainly have ears, my child.

FANNY:

Ears on my head, and, do you know, I sometimes think I have ears on my heart.

GRAMMY C.:

What a child!

FANNY:

I can hear the postman's horse with the ears on my head, but some things I think I hear with the ears on my heart.

Enter postman. He wears heavy coat or cape, high

boots into which his trousers are tucked, a cap and muffler. He has saddlebag for mail and papers.

POSTMAN:

Draws out newspaper, a smallish double sheet:

GRAMMY C.:

POSTMAN:

Good day, good folks.

Your paper.

Any letters?

No letters for this family. But the paper is wonderful. Here, Fanny, it tells about a locomotive that pulls stage coaches full of people. Just think, a stage coach without horses!

FANNY:

POSTMAN, *refolding paper*:

My! My! How can that be?

Oh here, take it, lots of news. A protest from Boston merchants because of the high tariff. Here's a new book advertised by Fenimore Cooper, that man that wrote about your cousin Enoch Crosby.

GRAMMY C.:

POSTMAN:

Well, Well, Well!

And here somewhere it tells about a blind asylum, the first in the United States. Here, little postmistress, give this to your grandmother.

Fanny takes the paper and puts it on Grammy C's lap.

Postman takes up saddlebag.

GRAMMY C.:

POSTMAN:

Let me get a bowl of soup.

No, no, I'm most home now. Supper'll be waiting.

Exit Postman.

GRAMMY C.:

Good night. Tuesday wouldn't be Tuesday without the weekly visit of the old postman. Grammy, this has been the saddest day of my life.

FANNY: *(disconsolately)*

GRAMMY C.: *(surprised)*

I shouldn't think it had. Seems to me that it has been pretty full of adventure. You have been to school. Not many little girls today have heard about the news from all over the country—a locomotive,—what President Jackson has done, and a home for the blind. O, Grandma, how am I ever going to know these things myself!

FANNY, *distressed*:

GRAMMY C.:

And then you had such a happy time with the children.

FANNY:

No, I didn't.

GRAMMY C.:

The scholars were lovely to you.

FANNY: *(choking)*

The teacher wasn't.

GRAMMY C.:

What do you mean?

FANNY: *(choking)*

I said, I'd love to come to your school..... She said she couldn't bother with me because I couldn't see.

GRAMMY C.:

There, there, there, you're all tired out.

FANNY, *raising head*:

No, I'm not, but my four ears heard so much today.

GRAMMY C., *with trembling voice*:

Poor child!

FANNY:

Oh, I want to know so much! I must learn. I want to know how to do things.

GRAMMY C. *puts arms around Fanny*:

FANNY:

Fanny dear, I'll teach you everything I can. If you will, when I get to be a big lady Grammy, I'll take good care of you.

GRAMMY C., *choking (speaking slowly)*

Not only me, Fanny, but of all old people. Be kind to them for my sake. Old and helpless men and women are sometimes neglected. I say that for the ears of your heart to hear.

FANNY, *brightening a bit (slowly and thoughtfully)*

It seems to me living is full of hard work and wonderful thoughts.

GRAMMY C.:

Dear Child, before you close your eyes each night to sleep
Lie still a while and dream awake; just keep
In treasure house your hopes; are they worth while?
Would God approve and give his gentle smile?

FANNY:

But, Grandma, I'm only such a helpless little girl,
I do not long to live in city's whirl
But Oh, I want so much, I do not ask
To see, like you, when working on a task
I cannot see, that's all there is to that.
You must find teachers who will teach me what
Is useful. Jones makes father's suits, and wheels
Are made by Crane the wheelwright, and the heels
Of Dolly-mare are shod by Blacksmith Sims
And even Deacon Brown composes hymns.
Well then, untie your thoughts and let them ramble wild
'Twill make your hopes more definite, my child.

GRAMMY C.:

Tomorrow is a new and untried street
You're mistress of the road, Adventure meet.

Kisses Fanny's head.

She exits.

Fanny kneels down by the arm of the rocking chair farthest from the audience, clasps her hands and looks longingly upwards.

FANNY:

(Light on Fanny)

O, Lord, teach me how to learn like other children. While the ears of my head hear things that hurt, may the ears of my heart hear things that teach me and may I always be able to catch the music God puts in the air for little girls that can't see.

CURTAIN.

PROLOCUTOR'S SPEECH FOLLOWING EPISODE I.

(Between the Curtain and the Audience)

*An infant kneels and angels gaze

With rapture at the sight

Well may they strike their golden harps

And swell their songs of praise;

An infant kneels, in artless strains

Its feeble voice to raise.

Oh what a lesson! If a child

So innocent must kneel,

Should not our sinful time-seared hearts

A deep contrition feel?

How often from a little child

May we a lesson learn!

Remind us of our wanderings

And urged to quick return.

*Written by Fanny Crosby in 1842.

Episode II.

PERSONS

FANNY CROSBY, young woman.

4 boys

2 girls

1 girl *(learning to knit)*

2 little girls

President JAMES K. POLK.

PROPERTIES

Table

2 oblong trays

A few little bowls or cups

An old doll
A partly knit stocking on needles
Some old-fashioned chairs (or antiques if desired)
Ground glasses for Miss Crosby.
(To simplify, fewer children and properties may be used.)

Episode II.

In the New York Institution For The Blind.

SETTING: A room of the New York Institution for the Blind.

TIME: After school hours.

R. Little boys in costume of the period are playing at something.

L. A table at which sit two girls, facing audience. Before each girl is an oblong tray with cups or bowls parallel to back rim of tray. Each bowl contains colored beads. The blind girls are making bead-work for fancy work. By the arrangement of the bowls they know the location of the colored beads.

Two little girls play cat's cradle with string. A little girl has a homely doll of the period.

In the centre sits Fanny Crosby, Teacher in the Institution, 28 years old. She is helping a little girl with her knitting.

Enter President JAMES K. POLK. He walks slowly, removes his hat, shakes the front edges of his coat and raises and lowers his shoulders as though to cool his body.

When the President gets near Fanny Crosby she tips her head, listening to the footsteps of an outsider. She rises and curtsies slightly.

PRES. POLK:

I am intruding. Beg pardon.

FANNY:

Oh, no sir. Not at all.

PRES. POLK:

This is Miss Crosby, I know.

FANNY: (*gasping slightly*)

And this is the voice of—

PRES. POLK:

James K. Polk.

FANNY:

Mr. President! Children! The President of the United States has honored us again with his presence.

The children rise and curtsy.

FANNY:

PRES. POLK, *playfully*:

Had I known you were expected, Mr. Pres—
Yes, I know what you would have done.....
prepared a welcome for me in rhyme as you
did three years ago when I visited this in-
stitution.

*Fanny lays her finger on her
lips and motions with her
left hand in modest contra-
diction.*

PRES. POLK:

M...m, I remember the first two lines now:
"We welcome not a monarch with a crown
upon his brow,
Before no haughty tyrant as suppliants we
bow."

*Fanny and the President laugh.
The President strolls over to
the girls beading at the
table.*

PRES. POLK:

What pretty work! May I look at it?

*The President turns quickly
to Fanny.*

PRES. POLK:

Miss Crosby! These girls can't be blind? To
do such beautiful work requires much
skill and without sight it seems an impos-
sibility.

He looks at the girls sharply.

FANNY:

Sorry. They are blind. I had someone ar-
range the bowls with one color of beads in
each bowl. They instantly memorized the
order of colors and keep the bowls in this
order.

PRES. POLK:

Wonderful!

FANNY:

They have other accomplishments too.
Wouldn't you like to hear the children sing?

PRES. POLK: (*bowing and
looking encouragingly at the
children.*)

FANNY:

Nothing would give me greater pleasure.
Sing for President Polk "There's Music in
the Air."

CHILDREN *sing*:

*"There's music in the air
When the infant morn is nigh
And faint its blush is seen
On the bright and laughing sky.
Many a harp's ecstatic sound
With its thrill of joy profound
While we list enchanted there
To the music in the air."

PRES. POLK: (*applauding*)

*Written by Fanny Crosby in 1861.

FANNY:

You may be excused children—run and play.

CHILDREN (*curtsying*)

{ Good day, sir.
Good day, Mr. President.
Good day, President Polk.

*Pres. Polk and Fanny Crosby
walk back and forth.*

PRES. POLK:

My dear young lady, in spite of the handicap of blindness you are a tremendous influence for good here.

FANNY, *protestingly*:

O, Mr. President! I haven't done much yet, only write verses and teach rhetoric and history.

PRES. POLK:

And speak to a joint session of Congress, and entertain Henry Clay and Napoleon's guard, Count Bertrand, and Jenny Lind, each and all with a poem in their honor.

FANNY:

That isn't much. Will you not be seated here? We are pleased you chose to rest here with us.

PRES. POLK:

I came to your beautiful retreat to escape the turmoil of the busy city of New York.

The President sighs heavily.

FANNY:

May I not get you some refreshment?

PRES. POLK:

No, thank you, with the permission of the superintendent I will share the evening meal with you all when it is time. I need food for my spirit more than food for my body. I wish the appreciation you deserve were being showered on you, President Polk.

FANNY:

*The President starts and looks
at Fanny.*

PRES. POLK:

Miss Crosby, the people entirely misunderstood me.

FANNY:

Yes, that was all, Mr. President.

*The President, thoughtfully
nods his head slowly.*

Your motives were high.

PRES. POLK:

Ah, but I am an expansionist.

FANNY:

May I call myself an expansionist too? Heretofore I have been devoted to informational expansion. Now I see that the normal life is religious. The ears of the heart first hear of possibilities. We box the ears of the heart and say, "Keep still", we stuff the mind and starve the heart.

PRES. POLK, *nodding*:

So..... That's so.

FANNY:

When we let the heart expand the mind grows, I can see that. I wish I could devote my life now to spreading spiritual knowledge. But who would listen to me or read my verses?

PRES. POLK:

Why not have your words set to music? Express the longings of the human heart in verse and turn them into songs, for the melody will always bring back the words.

*(President Polk's life was
lived on a high religious and
moral plane.)*

FANNY, (*clasping her hands
on her breast*)

Oh, Mr. President, do you think that would be possible for me?

PRES. POLK:

Possible? Assuredly. People will sing what they will not read.

*Pause. Fanny turns to the
President hopefully and the
President looks at Fanny
assuringly.*

FANNY:
PRES. POLK:
FANNY:

PRES. POLK:

FANNY: (*meditatively*)

Do you suppose I could write hymns?
You certainly could.... beautiful ones.
I, even I, make people conscious of deeper
spiritual experience?
Yes, and what you are able to do, it is your
duty to do.
Oh, blessed, blessed. I'll try, but oh, how I
need God's uplifting, helpful, strengthening
arm.

CURTAIN

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

To Follow Episode II.

A CHORUS:
(No. 130 in
"Hymns of Praise")

*All the way my Saviour leads me,
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt his tender mercy
Who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell,
For I know whate'er befall me
Jesus doeth all things well;
For I know whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

All the way my Saviour leads me,
Cheers each winding path I tread
Gives me grace for every trial
Feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter
And my Soul athirst may be
Gushing from the Rock before me
Lo! a spring of joy I see.
Gushing from the Rock before me
Lo! a spring of joy I see.

*Written in 1874

PROLOCUTOR'S SPEECH

Following the Musical Interlude that Ended Episode II.

PROLOCUTOR: If casually a friend of yours should say,
"Is it your habit frequently to pray?"
You might disown a prayerful life you lead.
Perhaps but few there be a sermon read
Or pray to free the heavy heart from care,
Yet they will sing unthinkingly a prayer.

So Fanny'll meet a million souls in bliss
Who did petitions frame that went amiss,
Whom she has taught to voice their prayers in song.
Her myriad hymns and gospel songs a throng
Of worshippers in every Christian land
Sing prayerfully in home and church and band.

Episode III.

PERSONS

FANNY CROSBY, stooping, dressed in black, with bits of white lace on
her basque. She wears ground glasses.
MRS. JOSEPH H. KNAPP.
DR. W. H. DOANE.

PROPERTIES

Centre table
Plush album
Book
Letter
Rocking Chair for Fanny
Straight chair
Washcloth on two knitting needles
Piano or organ
Pad and pencil

Music and words "Lord at thy Mercyseat, Humbly I fall," to tune of
"Robin Adair", (on top of piano or organ.)

Episode III.

SCENE: A room with a table. On it are a plush album, book and letter.
Beside the table also in centre of stage sits Fanny Crosby in rock-

ing chair. She is knitting a wash cloth. She is now 68 years old.
Empty chair opposite.

In the room is a piano or organ. A pad and pencil lie on it.

There is a knock.

FANNY:

Come in!

MRS. JOSEPH H. KNAPP, *enter-
ing, wearing hat and gloves
and carrying little bag:*

Oh, I am so glad you are home, Fanny.

Fanny rises to greet her.

FANNY:

Oh, Mrs. Knapp's voice.

MRS. KNAPP:

Yes, a melody keeps running through my head. Let me play it on your organ and see what it says to you.

Good, good. Take off your gloves.

FANNY: *(eagerly)*

*Fanny puts out her hands for
the gloves.*

*Mrs. Knapp lays down her
little bag on the table and
peels off her gloves.*

MRS. KNAPP:

The melody goes like this.....

*Mrs. K. hums the first two
phrases of "Blessed Assur-
ance, Jesus is Mine". They
both walk to organ. Mrs. K.
sits on the round piano
stool and plays the two
phrases she has hummed.
Fanny stands beyond Mrs.
K. facing audience.*

FANNY, *dreamily:*

A good melody—an uplifting soul speaks.
There is joy in these notes.

MRS. KNAPP:

I have no words for the air. What does the melody say to you?

FANNY:

Please play the first phrase again.

*Mrs. K. plays the first five
notes (the first phrase)*

FANNY, *meditatively:*

It says, "Blessed Assurance."

*Mrs. K. plays the next group
of notes.*

FANNY:

"Jesus is mine"—play on.

*Mrs. K. continues to play—
two phrases (Uses pencil
and writes each time).*

FANNY:

"Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine." Go on.

Mrs. K. plays the next phrase.

FANNY, *meditatively:*

"Heir of salvation."

*Fanny turns to Mrs. K. and
Mrs. K. plays the next phrase.*

FANNY:

"Purchase of God."

Mrs. K. plays two phrases.

FANNY:

"Born of His spirit, washed in His blood."
Then this is the refrain.....

MRS. KNAPP:

Mrs. K. plays the refrain.

MRS. KNAPP:

What does that say?

*FANNY, (Mrs. K. repeating,
and Fanny writing.)*

"This is my story, This is my song,
Praising my Saviour, All the day long."
For a long time I have had those words, or words nearly the same, running through my mind. It seems to me they have just been waiting to meet your tune. Now they have met and shall go through life together and we will call them "Blessed Assurance."

FANNY:

You are wonderful, Fanny.

MRS. KNAPP:

You are wonderful. I like people with ideas.
So do I.

MRS. KNAPP:

Come, let's sit down and have a visit.

*(They embrace and laugh)
They sit by the table.*

Fanny takes up her wash cloth.

MRS. KNAPP, *takes up letter*:

FANNY:

MRS. KNAPP:

FANNY:

MRS. KNAPP:

FANNY:

MRS. KNAPP:

FANNY, *(slowly)*:

MRS. KNAPP:

FANNY:

MRS. KNAPP:

FANNY:

They go to the piano. Mrs. Knapp plays "Robin Adair" and sings:

FANNY:

Mrs. Knapp sings:

MRS. KNAPP:

There is a rap at the door. Fanny and Mrs. Knapp look toward the door.

FANNY, *gently*:

A second, quick knock.

FANNY:

Enter Dr. W. H. Doane, in great haste, carrying a satchel and wearing a coat and hat.

Removes his hat.

Shakes hands. DR. DOANE:

Consults his watch

An English stamp! A letter from England!

Yes, from the widow of the great Charles Spurgeon, the British preacher.

How interesting!

She wrote asking for my hymn "Hold Thou My Hand", which she had heard sung in England. She writes that she has found comfort hearing it.

Who wrote the tune?

Herbert F. Main, wrote the music to my words.

Where did you get the idea?

Many of my hymns are the result of deep, intangible feelings that express themselves in rhyme. Life seemed very dark to me and I cried, "Dear Lord, hold thou my hand." Almost at once the sweet peace that comes of perfect assurance returned to my heart, and my gratitude sang itself into a hymn.

Let me see, how does it begin?

"Hold Thou my hand, so weak I am and helpless,

I dare not take one step without Thy aid;
Hold Thou my hand, for then, O loving Saviour,

No dread of ill shall make my soul afraid."

Touching..... But sometimes you think of words to an air....

Yes, if you like "Robin Adair" I will give my sacred words to it. Oh, Mrs. Knapp, will you sing them? I told my helper to put them on the top of the organ. Do you find them?

"Lord, at thy mercy seat

Humbly I fall,

Pleading Thy promise sweet,

Lord, hear my call.

Now let Thy work begin,

Oh, make me pure within,

Cleanse me from every sin,

Jesus, my all!"

You will find in the same place a hymn that I wrote years ago to the Indian song "Juanita". May I ask you to sing that?

"Oh, my Redeemer, what a friend Thou art to me!

Oh, what a refuge—I have found in Thee!
When the way was dreary, and my heart
was sore oppressed,

'Twas Thy voice that lulled me

To a calm, sweet rest.

CHORUS.

Nearer, draw nearer, till my soul is lost in
Thee,

Nearer, draw nearer, Blessed Lord to me."

Come.

Come.

Good evening. Excuse my impatience, FannyHow do you do, Mrs. Knapp? In exactly forty minutes my train leaves for Cincinnati where I am to help Dwight L. Moody

Puts manuscript sheet of music on the piano or organ.

FANNY:

DR. DOANE:

FANNY, somewhat helplessly

DR. DOANE:

Exit Dr. Doane, putting on his hat. Goes out.

MRS. KNAPP, *plays "Safe in the Arms of Jesus"*

FANNY:

Fanny is thinking hard, her lips moving silently.

FANNY, (Mrs. Knapp writing as Fanny dictates,) slowly:

As Fanny says the chorus half chantingly Mrs. Knapp softly plays the music as an obbligato.

FANNY: (Chorus)

MRS. KNAPP:

FANNY:

Mrs. K. takes the pad in both hands and studies the lines. Knock at the door. Dr. Doane enters immediately. The women turn to him. He puts down satchel.

MRS. KNAPP:

Mrs. K. tears the sheets from the block and hands them to Dr. Doane. He takes the sheets of paper, looks at them, says:

Smilingly folds them.

**Written in 1868.*

FANNY:

DR. DOANE:

Sings one verse and Mrs. K. joins in singing second verse and Fanny joining in chorus.

FANNY: (with uplifted face and arms)

in an evangelistic campaign. Here is a brand new melody of mine. Can you write words for it that will please Mr. Moody?

Now?

Yes, now.

I'll try. It seems short notice.

Be back soon—have an errand.

I'll play it.

Play just the first strain again.

I have the swing of it now. Please write.....

*"Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'ershadowed
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory
Over the jasper sea.

"Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'er shadowed
Sweetly my soul shall rest."
That fits the music perfectly.
Can you suggest any changes?

I would not change a word!

I am sorry, but I have to get that train for the west. I don't suppose.....
Yes, we are ready.

Beautiful! Beautiful!

Oh, Mr. Doane, I want you to try them out. Please sing them.

Thank you, Fanny, I know they'll delight Mr. Moody.

I remember how pleased he and Mr. Sankey were with your "Speed Away" and surely this has as great a message. Good-bye.

Father, as this song speeds away into the world, may it have Thy sanction and blessing and may it be a comfort and cheer to many of Thy children.

CURTAIN.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

To Follow Episode III.

"Speed Away" by Male Quartet.

PROLOCUTOR'S SPEECH

Following Musical Interlude Sung After Episode III.

PROLOCUTOR: (Before the Curtain.)

What makes us friends? Do constellations show,
Perhaps 'tis this—it seems to me I know

The finest quality God put in you,
The best my parents gave me that they knew—
These instincts in us hailed each other's gift.
God's plan it ever is His own to sift
That He may group the ones who do not shirk
Devotion to the furth'ring of His work.

Episode IV.

PERSONS

Leader of Evangelistic Meeting.

FANNY CROSBY

About 12 or 15 men.

PROPERTIES

Small wooden pulpit or plain table.

A large Bible.

Fanny Crosby's blank book with a black sheet, red sheet, white sheet and gold sheet.

Settees, (or kitchen chairs or camp chairs).

Gospel songbooks.

All pieces sung are in "Hymns of Praise."

Episode IV.

SCENE: Men sing before entering "Rescue the Perishing". An added attraction will be two or three members of the Salvation Army band. If not to be had have someone who can play violin and another a cornet. After curtains are drawn apart, the men enter and take seats. Leader passes books. Men in slightly threadworn clothes and disheveled hair, better than to make too much of an attempt at "Bowerybums".

LEADER, *beside the pulpit*:

Come now, boys, I guess we'll open the meeting by singing "Jesus is Calling", on Page 124.

Led by the cornet and fiddle, all sing.

Enter unobserved and assisted by an attendant, Fanny Crosby, who takes seat.

THE HALLELUJAH MAN:

LEADER:

Hallelujah!

I love that song and I know the author. She also wrote another we all enjoy singing,— "Blessed Assurance", and that with "God Be With You", were used by members of the Soldiers' Christian Association as pass words, during the Civil War. When a soldier met a comrade he said "494". That is, "God Be With You" in the hymn book they used. The other soldier would reply "Six farther on"—that is, No. 500, which is the number of "Blessed Assurance."

The MEN raise their eyebrows and say, in low tone:

LEADER:

Quite an idea.....good work.

Now we are going to have a change tonight. You hear me speak so often. I have invited someone in to give you a talk. She has sightless eyes, but God has given her spiritual sight and tho handicapped by blindness she has made of life a huge success and set many, many hearts to singing God's praise.

The LEADER leads up Fanny Crosby.

Fanny is dressed in an old-fashioned black dress with a boned waist and wears a bonnet and black or ground glasses. On her arm is a hand bag. She takes her place behind the little pulpit.

FANNY:

How glad I am to be with you this evening. I thank your leader for inviting me. If I enjoy one privilege more than another, it is

(Takes from her hand bag a book) FANNY, turning the pages toward them:

THE MEN:

FANNY:

She holds up the next page so all can see:

ALL, becoming interested and sitting up:

FANNY:

She holds up the blank book toward the men.

THE MEN:

FANNY:

She turns the page and holds it up. FANNY:

ALL:

FANNY, impressively:

Leader turns to page 216 and men sing one verse:

ONE OF THE MEN:

Leader nods his head, and Fanny smiles and sits erect.

SECOND MAN:

FANNY:

LEADER and FANNY and

HALLELUJAH MAN:

No. 120 All sing chorus:

LEADER:

Turning to Fanny

The Men show surprise.

that of talking to a body of men, for they are the heads of homes.

I have a book of colors here. If you who can see will tell me what they are, I will describe them as they look to me. What color is the first page of this book?

Black.

Black. That, to me, represents sin. There is nothing lovely and winsome about black, nor about sin. Sin is always black. It means transgression of law.

Now, what color is this?

Red.

Red to me is synonymous with blood. Now, remember that everyone may be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ who died for us on the cross. "Unto Him who hath loved us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be honor and praise forever."

Now, here is the next page.

White.

White to me stands for purity and cleanliness. Men do not become stalwart Christians by just accepting Christ as their Saviour. They must gradually become clean and White. Everyone has some contribution he may make to the world. You must realize that you, you, have a gift for the world.

When we make a present we go and give it in our best clothes. So the body and mind must be kept clean that the gift may not get soiled. White is the color of the humble angels' garb. The humble and pure walk hand in hand with Jesus to immortality.

The last page?

Gold.

Heaven—the celestial city with streets of gold. How we long to attain to that place where with our loved ones we may bask in Heavenly glories. If we expect to live with God eventually we must live close to Him while on earth.

"Every day, every hour,

Let me feel thy cleansing power;

May thy tender love to me

Bind me closer, closer, Lord to Thee.

You was talkin', Lady, about the humble and pure walking hand in hand with Jesus.

You know, when you talk about that I keep sayin' "I'll hold on 't you, Jesus." I'll hold on tight with both hands and pray hard not to let the tempter pull me away.

And he does hold on.

And Oh! my brother, never, never give up.

Praise God.

"Never give up, never give up

Never give up to thy sorrows,

Jesus will bid them depart.

Trust in the Lord, trust in the Lord

Sing when your trials are greatest

Trust in the Lord and take heart."

I want you to know, boys, that every song we have sung tonight was composed by this lady right here, Fanny Crosby. After our

service I want you to come up and shake hands with her and thank her for writing her thousands of Gospel Hymns. Now it's getting late.

Be here promptly tomorrow night.
Good night, boys.

Exeunt all except Fanny, Leader, Fanny's attendant and a Lonely Old Gentleman. Men shake hands as they leave. The neat, gray-bearded old gentleman edges toward the front.

LONELY OLD GENTLEMAN:
With elegance and courtesy.

FANNY, *cheerfully*
LONELY OLD GENTLEMAN:

Thank you for this pleasant evening. I was not aware that the author was still living who wrote those gospel songs my family used to sing around the fireside Sunday evenings.

Yes, still living. But time brings its changes. Yes. Time does bring changes. I try to keep cheerful, and, I read a good deal to pass time. Sad business.....this getting old. I have passed my 80th birthday. I have saved a neat sum of money but, Oh, how I long for a home. No one seems to want an old and friendless man around, they say he might get sick on their hands.

FANNY:

That is so. I only wish I had the dollars at my command that are spent for luxuries that are non-essentials. I would establish such a home as you and many others need. People seem to be willing to give for homes for children, homes for the down and outs, homes for cripples, and many other homes. Why not have homes for the cultured old men and women whose loved ones are gone? Alas! Alas! No place but the rooming house for such.

OLD MAN:

FANNY:

Oh, kind sir, you have brought to my mind a promise made to my dear old grandmother when I was but a child. How vividly it returns.

(The mission leader quietly continues tidying the room.)

FANNY:

"There are forms that flit before me
There are tones I yet recall;
But the voice of gentle grandma
I remember best of all.

"In her loving arms she held me
And beneath her patient care
I was borne away to dreamland
In her dear old rocking chair."

LONELY OLD GENTLEMAN:
FANNY:

Sweet memories, those.

One day, 80 years ago, I promised her I would take care of her when I got to be a big lady. I was too little to know that she would not be alive then. But she said, "Not only of me, Fanny, but of all old people for my sake." I haven't kept that promise. I wish I had—Oh, I wish I could.

LONELY OLD GENTLEMAN:

There I've got you all stirred up. I'm sorry, please forgive me.

FANNY, *(recovering her equilibrium and spirit)*:

I'm glad you have—it's time somebody brought me to my senses.
The flowering time of our mind may be past. That does not mean our spirit is blighted. We old people need a home where our spirit may be preserved in comfort and cheer till we flower again.

LONELY OLD GENTLEMAN:

FANNY:

LONELY OLD GENTLEMAN:

FANNY:

MISSION LEADER:

FANNY, (*clasping her hands together*):

Clasping hands and looking up—

Perhaps in another world.

It would be inexcusable if we let the aged go hence alone. Methinks, if one has attained age he must have been good and brave. The brave should have sweet ease.

And putter around at one's favorite tasks. And plant one's favorite flowers, watch them grow.

I've an idea! Wouldn't it be grand if everyone who has sung Miss Crosby's gospel songs would give a little and establish a Fanny Crosby Memorial Home for the Aged! I believe in return for what she has done for them they would be glad to give. I presume they, like me, have not realized the great need of such a Home.

Why, I couldn't ask for a favor in this life that would make me so happy. Of what use is a monument of granite? But it would be grand to establish a monument to one's life in the shape of a Home that would give ultimate pleasure to those who have lived long years creditably, and are in need of sunshine and cheer. Oh, Mr. Leader, if it could be possible for a monument like that to be built where we old people might be coddled and loved.

Oh, God, let this come to pass. (*Turning to audience*)

Oh, we all need some petting, when our sun is setting.

For it's harder to be brave when old age comes creeping

And finds us weeping, loved ones gone.

So please give to us some petting when life's sun is setting.

For we're old, alone and tired, since our life's hard work is done.

CURTAIN.

PROLOCUTOR'S SPEECH

After Last Episode

PROLOCUTOR:

*During the Prolocutor's entire speech there is heard very softly the air without words of *"Some Day The Silver Cord Will Break", No. 109 in "The Male Quartet". This may be played on the church organ or there may be unison singing off stage.*

How wondrously her melody hath grown,
Recalling those whose feet have gone astray
And others helped to live a perfect day,
And steadied those the Lord hath kept his own.
The world is purer for her hymns that voice
The affirmation: Christ still sheds from above
His harmonizing sweetness and his love
That make our daily life so full of praise.
Yet one great promise she did not fulfill—
Her grandma's wish to care for all the old
In memory of her. She hoped to live
Like her protecting ancestor to be
A hundred years and more—a hundred and three
Can you conceive the rapture that she'd know
If we take up her work and make it grow?
For death has pinioned her activities.
A cause espoused in life lives on and on.
So it is up to us to keep alive
Her poetry, and optimism, and strive
To endow the CROSBY HOME that we'll bestow
A heavenly place on earth as long ago
She promised. Her songs have been our very prayer
Let's give our thanks that old folks now may share
Our gratitude to God. They'll bless her name,
And thankfully perpetuate her fame.

*Written in 1891.